



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF MENTAL RETARDATION SERVICES
ANDREW JACKSON BUILDING, 15th FLOOR
500 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243

**For Immediate Release
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High Expectations for 2007 Disability MegaConference

Nashville – The fifth annual Tennessee Disability MegaConference kicks off Thursday, May 31st and runs through Saturday, June 2nd at the Nashville Airport Marriott Hotel. The statewide event assembles self advocates, professionals and family members to promote an understanding for independence and dignity for persons with disabilities.

“This is the major event of the year for those involved with mental retardation and developmental disabilities,” said Tennessee Division of Mental Retardation Services Deputy Commissioner Stephen H. Norris. “It serves as an educational platform by way of exchanging ideas, gleaned experience from nationally recognized experts, and networking.

“This is all about Tennesseans with disabilities and providing them with healthy, secure, and meaningful lives. The knowledge and tools we take from this conference enhances our support, which results in a better quality of life for the persons we serve.”

The conference's theme is “Sharing Our Strength, Empowerment, Inclusion, Self Determination and Choice.” A strong lineup of speakers is scheduled, including: Ms. Lois Curtis, one of the original Olmstead plaintiffs (The Olmstead Act awarded the right of individuals with disabilities to live in the community instead of institutions), Ms. Glenda Horton-Manning, one of the country's most requested motivational speakers on parenting and children; Robert Watson, Executive Director of DateAble, Inc., a non-profit dating service for persons with and without disabilities, speaking on sexuality issues and Sujeet Desai, an accomplished musician born with Down syndrome.

(more)

Page 2/MegaConference

An emphasis on audience participation highlights the breakout sessions. Activities include music and dance, Tai Kwon Do, and photography.

Organizers are expecting approximately 1,000 attendees, which will make this the largest conference thus far.

“There is a strong agenda and a variety of content,” said Norris. “This will be a very productive conference. Everyone will benefit greatly.”

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